

# CHAPTER 5

## CEQA STATUTORY SECTIONS

---

### 5.1 POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The proposed program would not have any significant unmitigable environmental impacts. Potential effects on aesthetics, biological and cultural resources, hazards and public safety, traffic and transportation, and utilities and service systems may occur as a result of the program that are potentially significant. The majority of the program impacts result from construction activities. They are temporary impacts that can be mitigated to less than significant levels with the mitigation measures identified in the EIR. Operational impacts were also identified as potentially significant effects to public safety and operational pipeline capacity. These operational impacts were also determined mitigable; no significant unavoidable operational or temporary impacts would result. Mitigation proposed as part of the program, as well as measures identified in this EIR, would avoid or reduce all of the impacts to a less than significant level.

### 5.2 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

CEQA defines cumulative impacts as two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts. The cumulative analysis is intended to describe the “incremental impact of the project when added to other, closely related past, present, or reasonably foreseeable probable future projects” and can result from “individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time (*CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15355).

A cumulative impact is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated together with other projects causing related impacts. The purpose of this analysis is to disclose potential significant cumulative impacts resulting from the new service and FIG installation in combination with other comparable projects. The program involves the request for a new service allowing FIG technologies to be used for installation of conduit to house fiber optic cable. SCG/SDG&E is not requesting to be a telco provider, just to provide infrastructure for the end user.

It is anticipated that the construction associated with FIG installation could potentially overlap with other public or private utility projects during the same timeframe. Such overlap would likely be identified during SCG/SDG&E’s process of obtaining encroachment permit(s) for proposed FIG installations and would be properly addressed by the local planning agency at that time.

### **Aesthetics**

Upon completion, the proposed program would make no more than a *de minimus* contribution to cumulative aesthetic impacts because FIG installation would occur in underground facilities. The program's contribution to cumulative impacts on visual quality during construction would not be significant due to the relative short duration of the construction impacts.

### **Air Quality**

With implementation of mitigation measures incorporated in the EIR, the temporary increase in criteria air pollutants from fugitive dust sources (e.g., earthmoving activities) and operation of construction equipment would not be cumulatively considerable given the short-term nature of the related effects. The program's contribution to emissions in the region is well below the significance thresholds for all air districts within which the program would be implemented. However, because heavy equipment and fugitive dust emissions would create levels of air pollutants during construction, the EIR identifies mitigation measures to minimize the generation of dust and exhaust emissions associated with construction activities.

With implementation of the identified mitigation measures, the proposed program would comply with all air quality standards, and the increase in criteria air pollutants by the program are cumulatively *de minimus*. Therefore, the program would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria air pollutants or emissions in the study area.

### **Biological Resources**

Biological resources, particularly threatened, endangered, candidate, and other listed species, would not be cumulatively affected by development. The state and federal governments, through DFG, the Corps, USFWS, and National Marine Fisheries Service, have promulgated a regulatory scheme that limits impacts on these species. The effects of the proposed program are rendered less than cumulatively considerable due to mitigation requiring compliance with all applicable regulations that protect plant, fish, and animal species. The mitigation measures imposed (e.g., pre-construction surveys and resource staking, presence of an environmental resource coordinator, contractor training) and SCG/SDG&E's commitment to avoid sensitive resources by design would render the proposed program's contribution less than cumulatively considerable.

Additionally, cumulative impacts of the proposed program on biological resources are considered less than significant because (1) activities related to the proposed program would be temporary and would avoid direct impacts to plant, fish, and animal species, and (2) proposed rights-of-way used for FIG installation are already disturbed from original construction and on-going maintenance activities of other utilities or roads.

### **Cultural Resources**

The excavation and ground disturbances, individually and cumulatively, would not be likely to affect the oldest, largest, or most significant type of prehistoric or historic resource in the study area. Moreover, the potential for avoidance is great because excavation during FIG installation

would occur in a previously excavated trench from installation of the existing pipeline. For areas where construction would be required outside the existing pipeline trench width, standard mitigation measures are expected to reduce unavoidable impacts to less than significant levels. Therefore, the cumulative effect of the anticipated impacts on known and potential archaeological sites would also not be significant.

### **Noise**

With implementation of mitigation measures proposed as part of the program, the temporary increase in ambient noise levels during FIG installation would not be cumulatively considerable given the short-term nature of the related impacts. There would be no operational noise impacts associated with the program.

### **Public Safety**

Installation of conduit in existing natural gas pipelines could result in damage to gas lines potentially creating a public health hazard if a pipeline rupture were to occur during FIG installation and / or operation that could lead to a gas leak explosion. However, no significant impacts to public safety is anticipated to occur that cannot be mitigated by design and conformance to federal and state pipeline safety regulations; therefore, the proposed program would not constitute a considerable contribution to any cumulative effect regarding public safety.

### **Transportation and Public Services**

Cumulative construction-related traffic impacts would depend on the timing of other individual projects within coinciding locations. Temporary traffic-related impacts could occur at the local level during access to the pipeline located within a roadway for FIG installation. The program would not result in any increase in vehicular traffic beyond the temporary increases described in impacts listed in Chapter 4.7. Construction operations for FIG installation would result in temporary traffic obstruction on traffic flow and emergency access. The temporary traffic disruption resulting from FIG installation would not be cumulatively considerable because traffic control plans would be implemented as part of the proposed program and the standard traffic control requirements of the state and local encroachment permits would be obtained prior to FIG installation where required. In the long-term, there would be no program impacts because, upon completion, environmental conditions on the overlying roads would be essentially the same as if the proposed program had not been implemented. Therefore, the program would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to transportation or public service impacts.

### **Utilities and Service Systems**

The proposed program has service implications including potential impacts on operations, existing capacity and future expansion of active gas pipelines. Further issues exist in response to when capacity of the distribution system must be expanded due to future gas load demands. To resolve this issue, SCG/SDG&E would not allow installation of conduit or fiber optic cable in any pipeline if it estimates that installation would result in insufficient gas capacity in the line in the next 60 months. Installation would be allowed if arrangements were made for the carrier to pay

for the increase in the gas capacity, avoiding that situation. Thus, in the case of capacity constraints more than 60 months in the future, the Carrier may elect to terminate service or relocate its route, such that no additional pipeline construction or trenching would occur.

The proposed capacity service requirement imposed by SCG/SDG&E would protect against the potential for significant cumulative impact that might occur if more than one conduit were to be installed in a pipeline, or if the capacity of gas service were to be reduced by the cumulative use of several pipelines by FIG technology.

The proposed program would not directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects on human beings. The impact analysis included in this EIR indicates that for all resource areas, the proposed program would either have no significant impacts, or, for impacts that would not affect human beings, less than significant impacts with mitigation incorporation.

### **5.3 GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS**

California's continuing and rapid population growth has statewide direct and indirect cumulative impacts on population and housing. The effect of the proposed program on population growth is indistinguishable from the general mix of factors that lead people to move to California and is not a critical component in such decisions. It has no impact on the rate of growth due to births, public services (e.g., fire protection, police protection) are at or near their limit in some localities. This proposed program creates no new demand for those services. Utilities and service systems (e.g., sewer capacity, water supply) are at or near their capacity in some localities, however this proposed program creates no new demand for those services.

The new tariff service proposed by SCG/SDG&E does not involve infrastructure such as roads, water, or sewer lines that may induce population growth within specific areas. The availability of high-speed, high-volume communications is one factor among many (e.g., cost of living, economic opportunities, market availability, quality of schools, salary levels, tax levels) in the decision by people and businesses to locate in California. Therefore, the proportional contribution of the proposed system to California's future growth will be too remote and speculative for analysis. The indirect impacts of the proposed program on that growth are only speculative. A less than significant impact to growth inducement would occur.